LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY
continuing
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EDITORIAL

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WRITERS, AND I hope readers, have to fight against many slogans which betoken slovenliness of mind, that civilian equivalent of " idle on parade ". I have always pounced with terrier-glee on " ack-Charlie ", but there is as well " in these days ", that keening excuse with which people accept any wantonness. This leads on to that agony of boredom induced by those who, with the air of having performed a feat of mathematics for the million, observe so originally that we are in " the fifth year of the war ".

Though true, this statement, like much else that appears to be so, is only half true. Many of us find, to our ulcered amazement, that it is the ninth year not of " this " or " the " war, but simply of war. Nine years are near a decade, or one seventh of the span normally expected. Any one of these nine have served to close the life of thousands at twenty years or less. For those gallants, expectation of life, in the insurance sense, is low; and for that reason, may they always know it, for none of the generations enclosing them, is hope in the old sense, quite at its meridian.

This differentiates the opening of this year from any others of the previous major-war-years of the century. Our spirit cannot be wholly or accurately defined as one of awe, dread, or responsibility, but it can be expressed in the words with which it was so generally, not greeted, but faced. . . . " I'd have the year end soon, and you and I meet at the end of it."

This, be it marked, in the one year that we have by the

standards of four years ago most to celebrate. Those standards have gone. Not only the old world went in September, 1939, but the old view of war too. It made it the more painful to embark on war. A war not only "worse" than the last (all are that), but no longer seen as previous wars had been, an unruly dog soon to be quelled. We entered this present illness as voluntary but protesting germs, either to kill the patient or prevent in it this recurring crisis of a malignant disease For the first time, we didn't respect the disease. We found it, as doctors do, a bore. Like certain doctors, we knew we had to go into it, be eaten up, to find the cure—or, since the cure was always there, make it acceptable.

Easier to hide than cure—and once the Black Death is on us, all but a few embrace the Danse Macabre. This war, the blackest death, involving life, of the many we have so far allowed ourselves, brings no hope for restoration of a lost world. It was that which led to it. With no escape into the past—and tension snaps if it never lessens—the only escape for those who needed it was into what may be called the weaklies' Future.

Just as centuries' old religious intolerance has been replaced by political dogma, without altering in the least the hearts of born heretics, so to-day Reconstruction has taken the place of " escapism ". I have always tilted at the Reconstruction offered us as merely the contemporary form of that escapism against which its present perpetrators were most loud in the last days of peace. And I would stress " contemporary form " because so many tend to think that things are altered and events controlled, once new forms are given to them.

Change, of course, depends on new forms. But the giving of new forms does not necessarily imply change. Change is not discernible. You can measure life in terms of breath, and death as cessation of frame's function. But the moment

of change baffles the most believing Bede to chronicle. Not even social change can be measured by man's life or history's record. All that can be seen, as it is felt, is growth or retrogression.

Progress there truly is. Through the aeons, a painful inch is gained. But the advance is spiral, not straightforward. Possibly in one century humanity may manage to find itself half a millimetre " ahead ", in what we mean by "civilization", of one two thousand years ago. But it is ahead only relatively, as a person on a spiral staircase at Kew is ahead of an oncomer below. Between those two there is as little difference as in means of locomotion from chariot and cart, train, car, and plane. Each is the most advanced its age can produce. Similarly bow, sling, gun, bomber are continuance of forms of killing. The form may change; the force behind remains the same. Who talks of reconstruction? Do they mean reconstitution?

From house to flat, from road to roundabout—how characteristic of this age it is that our Reconstruction lands on the most material side, and that materially! For, whilst rebuilding, few have determined there shall be no more that assault on eye and ear which make our buildings harmful—I refer, first, to that general lack of sound-proofing which charitably ensures us that we shall not hear the one radio programme in a month we may wish to, because of our neighbours, or else enables us, through their own, to hear the very one we had avoided. As to eye, assaulted like ear, those of us who pay rates have yet small voice in determining the appearance of our streets. Little use it might seem to many, planning, never so well, what buildings they may, so long as sky-signs deface them with their predatory yells on anxiety and the more intestinal forms of health or lack of it. The argument against street advertising is not so much that it covers crudely buildings that might best not be seen. It is that it tires us.

Advertisements must tire, that sales-resistance be weakened. But in that new world in which we are all going to enjoy Security, sales-competition would be lessened.

We hear none of this, because to attack advertising would be not to storm, so to speak, the barricades, but to undermine what are still the foundations. Reconstruction dare not attack.

Similarly, Security is but a sky-sign. It is not that people should be secure, but what will happen to them if they are, that is of moment. Not what is on top, but what goes on within the building. . . .

Once, it was held for acclaim that, after years of civil war and invasion, a man could walk through England, broad and long, without attack. He had not long found that, before he attacked overseas. . . .

Earlier, a man found a stone. Two things he did with it: put it in a sling or spear to destroy; pile others on top, to build. What he destroyed were wild beasts. What he built against was to keep them out. And having achieved this security—he did not sit back and enjoy it. He attacked other men. He, who had come to terms with his foes, made other foes. He attacked men, and they him, because he had more stones, slings, walls, animals dead or tamed. Man against man, tribe against tribe. Man, picking up that first stone, aeons ago, looked at his own skull, Hamlet-wise, ten thousand years hence. . . . But in that skull lay a worm that took longer to grow than a body and is harder to kill. It becomes, if unbroken, a brain, and when it has grown, uncoils to a question-mark, saying "Why?" The body that bore it, through which it has bored, finds gradually that this which has wormed its way through its consciousness, takes control. Body's actions and appetites are now queried, its attitudes told. Body, no longer in charge, no longer charges; its rampancy's reined. Easy to think brain has conquered, and lusts and limbs now are Tamburlaine's

kings. But the brain, don't forget, is embodied ; it carries the hue of its housing.

Flesh may no longer flauntingly rule, yet brain's tinged by its tyranny, and that at the moment of what seems thereby peace. It might seem impasse is fixed. But what made brain uncoil ? What first melted its glacial sleep ? A minute flame inside it, of which Spirit is so far the name.

There may have been moments when that has seemed to take over. But never for long, and far from wholly yet. When most it nears freedom, brain seeks to abort it—and then the old body, knowing brain exhausted, resumes domination. Spirit, panting, the one part of us that trembles to live, fights with intensity the only dying part of us, with all the hatred of Fairy Queen against Demon King in those folk-lore performances which are called pantomimes . . . a hatred, be it noticed, which uses the living bodies of " mortal " characters, be they Jack, Jill, Hoods Riding or Robin, and the rest, for its combat.

In this war, which I feel myself as a flight of hooded birds of horror, lustreless in wing and bright only in tearing blind beak, at least the realization of the foul odour of denial marks some bellow-spurt, keeping Spirit alive. Marks, not change, but progress—little enough to set beside the giants' stride, but, considering our puniness, at least effort, and the willingness to make effort when we are well.

If, in view of our Spirit's as yet unformulated designs, both New Year and New World seem puerile pinpricks on the Madonna-blue print of a heaven not ours to inherit, it does not hurt the mind's muscles to smile. It keeps them elastic. Elastic they must be, for we know that talk of merely material Security is based finally on fright. Fright from the past is "worse" than fright of the future, and the desire for security is as unhelpfully unnatural as Peter Pan's wish, vide Rachel Ferguson, not to grow up. Seen as that, Security can be smiled at as one further form of the force that

produced this and all other wars—not the desire for power, which one would be a cripple without, but the need for self-importance: whence evil, greed, starved affection and impotence come. In this year, which many hence may well find it may have been a peculiarity to have been alive in, our wish is " May the minute and warring elements which, by their stress, make up our selves, be of no account, save in the life and work we hand on, when we are able to leave ".

SOME COMMENTS ON MY BOOKS

By NORMAN DOUGLAS

(*concluded*)

IN THE BEGINNING

eight extracts (*pp.*)

MY PRIVATELY PRINTED edition appeared in 1927 and consisted of seven hundred copies, all but about thirty being now sold. I forget the price. For the binding I chose a variety of designs ; the paper was the same as that used for my *Birds and Beasts*—the best hand-made on the market, and the type is Elzevir, one of my favourites. How much prettier it is than many of our freakish modern founts ! I also replaced the clumsy English system of inverted commas for conversations by the French method, as being more convenient and reposeful to the eye and equally intelligible. Also : no numberings or titles for the chapters.

If the book reads smoothly, that is because I took unusual trouble with the writing. Two or three commercial English Editions exist, the last being that of the Pelham Library. Their text has been emasculated ; some ten sentences were deleted out of respect, I suppose, for the refined sensibilities of the British bourgeois. Americans must have coarser natures, for they reprinted the original text as it stands. One remembers that, not so long ago, certain works by an eminent English writer, Havelock Ellis, were not procurable save in American editions. Is this state of affairs to our credit ? In one of the passages here reproduced (page) the reference to " horses " is obscure, because an earlier sentence which would explain it has been cut out.

The tale is woven round that of Ninus and Semiramis, and I consulted everything that ancient writers, and not a few of their modern commentators, have told us about this remarkable couple and their period, unearthing, incidentally, other little details which have helped to build up the story.

This book was a strain on my inventive faculties. Some twenty new words were coined, and a fresh Heaven had to be created with eight major deities, as well as half-gods and demons and a brace of gentle satyrs, not to speak of hitherto unknown races of men. Lucian was of some help in regard to the divine members of this community, while the Great Father himself is modelled upon my conception of that old Jahveh of the Jews :

" At the Sun's announcement, his divine lineaments revealed themselves all roseate with satisfaction, and into those blue eyes came a look of ineffable wisdom and malice. . . ."

For the other Immortals I found no prototypes. The amusements of some of them are not such as would appeal to our sense of humour ; these perverse ones must be having good fun just now, watching us while we blow each other to pieces in battles that will end only to begin again. The moral ? Fun for the gods is not fun for mortals. Our human race made that sad discovery long ago.

Whenever desirable I played ducks and drakes with chronology and suchlike. Why not ? *In the Beginning* is an allegory and no history. This suggested the importation of one or two deities alien to my local theocracy and a few trifling geographical displacements. The Himalayas, for example, were shifted from their present position to form the boundary between Mesopotamia and an imaginary China. It suited my purposes, and the Himalayas have hitherto raised no objection.

In *Looking Back* (p. 432–434) I gave a reason why this book might well be distasteful to more than one reader. " It lacks the admixture of saccharine which is prescribed by the taste of to-day. . . . He would have liked me to insert a touch of that " hopefulness " with which the present generation loves to delude itself, in defiance of the teaching of all history. . . . The vanity of human en-

deavour: where shall you find a better example than in Assyria?" And then one thinks of all the other civilizations that have gone the same way—the moral? Nothing on earth is permanent save only change, unless, of course, we include the changeless race of Gods, the Great Father and his more or less disreputable brood of children—call him Jupiter if you like—those phantoms whom we create in our own image and endow with our own varying facets of good or bad humour, of lust and wisdom and malice and inconstancy.

The demon Aroudi and the Wind are attractive Immortals, and Menetha gives utterance to such platitudes as one may expect from a Goddess of Wisdom. Among earth-dwellers I like the Court physician with his ambiguous pedigree and non-ambiguous method of combating the goodness-germ. Dame Fattuta (*fà tutto*: she does everything) was something of a "trouvaille". She is a corrective, and provides that refreshing intrusion of low life into regal surroundings which Shakespeare would have commended.

Two misprints:

p. 176 line 10 from bottom *for* both felt *read* felt both

p. 182 line 7 from bottom *for* Maiden. She *read* Maiden, she

A third is not worth mentioning.

An American reviewer made a remark to the effect that this book "contains no loose ends". I should like to shake hands with that man. I had paid particular attention to this point and am delighted to think that he noticed it.

A correspondent in New York also sent me a number of drawings for *In the Beginning*. They were admirably conceived, with just the right seasoning of phantasy. I think it was Mr. Charles Cullen. It is unlikely that these lines should ever reach his eye; if they do, I would beg him to note that I kept the pictures only in the hope that sooner or later there would be a demand for an illustrated

edition of this book, even as there are already four illustrated ones of *South Wind.*

BIRDS AND BEASTS OF THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY

Here are five extracts (pp.) from this book, and I should like to draw attention to the remarkably good paper and print of the private edition; if its binding leaves something to be desired, that is because I had not yet learned that there was only one reliable binder in Florence. The English commercial edition contains some fresh material, and the American one has an entertaining Preface by Will Percy, the poet.

The heaviness of these extracts was unavoidable if the present book was to be a kind of cross-section of all my others. Let me apologize by saying that I could have chosen even heavier ones without much trouble, such as the discussion on the adjective *xouthos* when applied to animal coloration.

The book was written at Monza. I still like the introduction, and the whole idea of the thing. Monographs of this kind, to my way of thinking, have a charm of their own, and become more appetizing in proportion as the field of inquiry is restricted. "The Flora of Canterbury Cathedral": what a delightful subject! I wrote one on the Street Games of London; now I hear that someone is patiently investigating the peculiar flora of our bombed areas. Good luck to him! (After the Great Fire, I believe, the place was invaded by the rocket, *eruca*). And those gaping wounds that reveal so dismally the structure and composition of our houses have lately suggested to me another essay on similar lines—an essay by some enthusiastic and leisured expert tracing the evolution from early days of our building materials, their kinds, their places of origin and modes of application. The "Geology of London"

would be an attractive theme and one after my own heart, if my knowledge of London were not slight and of geology slighter. Perhaps something of this sort has already been written.

Two friends at Athens whose help is acknowledged in these pages are now dead—Petrocochino and Atchley. I knew them over a number of years and have mentioned the first in *Looking Back*. " Petrocock," one of the founders of the Anglo-Hellenic League, was kindness itself. They gave him a C.B.E. for his services to our nation. Though he was neither young nor in particularly good health, I cannot help thinking that the distresses of his country may have hastened his end. As to Atchley of the British Legation —he knew more about the Greek language and people and countryside than many a native. He once told me that he was collecting materials for a Flora of Crete. In his posthumously published Greek Flora will be found some information about his life, and the Athens papers also had cordial obituary notices of him. He died during an excursion on the slopes of Mount Kyllene; they buried him in the nearest village. This mountain, according to Aristotle and Lindermayer, was famous for its race of white blackbirds. Atchley himself was something of that kind. Now I have no friends left in Greece. And the two others, Brooks and Mann, who contributed the poems to this book, are likewise no more. Dead, all four of them—in how short a space of time !

As no fresh edition of *Birds and Beasts* is ever likely to appear there is one thing I should like to say, namely, that my comment on Martial's epigram about the Sauroktonos will not hold water. The correct—and improper—interpretation of these lines is given on page 194 and footnote of H. Licht's *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece;* Routledge, 1932....

For the last sixty-six years I have been intending to visit the Selborne of Gilbert White. Two weeks ago that feat

was accomplished, and during the return journey in the train the following notes on the Geology of London were jotted down: "London may have remained a wood-town longer than some others owing to the scarcity of rock in the London basin and the difficulty of transport from elsewhere. Curious historical data to be unearthed on the transition from wood to stone. Chapter on the main ingredients of to-day's architecture, the commoner varieties of stone, where found, how worked, at what cost? Nothing fresh can be expected in the domain of everyday building material; all the sources are known and exploited. No volcanic rock: contrast with Edinburgh. Chapter on ornamental stones, sedimentary and primitive. Sources not all exploited; new kinds now being discovered and imported from different countries. (1) *Sedimentary:* marbles plain and coloured from Italy, Belgium, etc. Describe twelve principle kinds. Plain: white, black, too much bilious yellow. Coloured: absence in London of types common in Paris like Porto Venere and Levanto. Query: is our dark green the Verde di Calabria? English alabaster too soft, except the Carlisle variety? (2) *Plutonic:* granites and porphyries red and grey from Scotland, Sweden, etc. Describe their species, *provenance*, date of introduction, method of working. Whether their beauty and resistance to atmospheric influences compensates for high cost of production and transport, and explains their growing popularity? Commercial and technical details. Scant mineralogy save to note, e.g., the decorative value of felspar crystals or mountain limestone fossils. Corsi, in his book on Roman marbles, indicates where the finest specimens of each kind can be seen. The same could be done here.

A special excursus on structures like the Thames Embankment. Statues and monuments of whatever material are adventitious elements; not an integral part of London geology; omit.

Underfoot. Paving-blocks and cobbles of diverse mineral classes. Haymarket the last West-end street to lose cobbles (risky descent for hansom-cabs). Hay Hill not cobbles but sets. Sandstone flags are being displaced by cement compositions; the once universal road-mettle of syenite has given way to asphalt and asphalted wood. Kerbs of gneiss or suchlike may count on a long life.

Appendixes on slate: artistic disaster, economic god-send. On glazed tiles, their cheery and ageless lustre. On bricks: once purely utilitarian, now employed æsthetically with success either alone or in combination with stone. Modern and mediaeval kilns compared as to output and quality. Red colour best, though pleasing effects might be obtained by judicious marriage of black and white. Mellowed by a light deposit of coal dust and marred by a heavy one. Appendix on concrete, which lends itself cheaply and gaily to every architectural atrocity and may end in supplanting stone-work altogether. Another on *pastiches*, freak and imitation stones invented by the ancients but unknown here till lately; now favourites; their infinite range of colour, strange processes of manufacture, prices and weathering capacities. Footnote on recent inroads of metal and glass on house-façades. Another on the unfitness in our climate of any kind of painted plaster, unless the owner will renew the surface more frequently than he does."

Notes less amateurish than these (I have doubtless forgotten the main things to be said) might be welded into a pleasing volume with illustrations such as the picturesque marble mines of Carrara, a Welsh slate-quarry, workmen sawing up a block of Bath stone: one could easily name a round dozen. We have the *Birds of London;* why not *Stones of London*? It would be a document in its small way. For the face of the town is changing, and the stones of to-day are not quite those of yesterday, nor yet those of to-morrow.

SUMMER ISLANDS

Five extracts (pp.) from *Summer Islands*, a disproportionate number considering the small size of this thing, which contains merely two articles on the islands of Ischia and Ponza. The reason is that I have a particular affection for this antiquated and flowery booklet, an affection merging into wistfulness and even melancholy as I turn its pages.

If one is never supremely happy for more than a moment, I was seldom nearer that condition than during those days, not moments, which were spent in July, 1908, on Ponza. As to Ischia—I have been there over and over again, the first time nearly fifty years ago and never save in congenial company or else blissfully alone; and never otherwise than happy, although on more than one occasion, round about 1900, I had to be transported there on the steamer of the Naples Zoological Station and then carried to my lodgings, being crippled with rheumatism in every joint. (Gratitude to the mineral baths must not be left out of account.) Few foreigners can know Ischia better than I do, and few natives. On one of my most recent visits to the place I was with G. M. Orioli, who has left a record of our walks there in Chapter 19 of his *Adventures of a Bookseller*. I have also mentioned it on pp. 294–297 of *Looking Back*, and elsewhere.

This little book has been printed and is at present being bound in Lord Carlow's Corvinus Press, in *thirty* copies. As there is small chance of its ever being published again and as hardly anybody save a subscriber is likely to see a copy, I will transcribe a passage or two from my "Dedicatory Letter" written last year, for the sake of its bibliographical interest:

"The first of these articles appeared no less than thirty-three years ago under its present title, in the *English Review* of February, 1909. Some of the material was subsequently

incorporated in my *Siren Land* (1911), and Chapter XVI of *South Wind* contains a burlesque of Iasolini's description of the mineral baths of Ischia, to which I refer here on page 6. Joseph Conrad deals with this *English Review* paper in a letter which has been printed (*Life and Letters*, vol. ii, p. 67).

" As to the second—my account of the Ponza Islands was printed under its present title in the *English Review* of April, 1913. I utilized the geological features of this group, over-coloured for literary purposes, to describe the cliff-scenery of Nepenthe in *South Wind*, whereas the pumice-stone industry of that imaginary place, as well as its decayed bathing-establishment of Saint Elias, were inspired by what I saw elsewhere, on Lipari. The minerals mentioned in *South Wind* are such as occur on Ponza; nearly all of them.

" Not long after this, *Scribner's Magazine* wrote that they would be glad to print the Ponza article for their American readers and it was agreed that I should send them some coloured illustrations. These were done in pastel from my photographs by C. C. Coleman of Capri (the " Christopher Goldfinch " of Compton Mackenzie's *Vestal Fire*) and under my supervision, in order that there should be no mistake about the correct tints of rock and sea. I thought them admirable of their kind. But (though they paid for it) they never printed the article; I cannot say why. Nor do I know what became of the pastels.

" Then, in 1931, these two papers were reprinted in book form under their present title by my friend Desmond Harmsworth (Kemp Hall Press, Oxford). I cannot help thinking that the undertaking would have been more successful if he had been in a position to supervise it personally. As it was, none of the twelve or fifteen photographs, save old Iasolini's map, were reproduced; which annoyed me considerably, since I had taken them with

great care to illustrate certain points in the text. This edition, I hear, was remaindered long ago. (It was).

" Later on—I forget the exact date—the Pynson Printers of New York produced an American issue of this booklet under the same title. I sent them the photographs, but instead of using them as they were, they employed some cheap draughtsman to convert a selection of them into pictures, with the result that their only value, their local flavour, was drained out of them. One gained a false impression from such drawings; they might have done for almost any other part of the world, and this annoyed me even more. The publishers subsequently wrote to tell me that their venture had not been a profitable one. Serve them right ! I was delighted to hear it.

" Now I should like to present you with these photographs, but I cannot. They are inaccessible at the moment —in Italy, and this annoys me most of all, because I feel sure you would have appreciated their Mediterranean aroma and neither left them out of the book nor turned them into childish ' pictures '."

TOGETHER

Together has been out of print for some time and there are about twenty corrections and additions to be made if a new edition is ever to be published. Here, meantime, are eight extracts (pp.) from this book. It contains portrait-sketches of friends and relations set in that frame of mountain and forest which was the earliest landscape that ever greeted my eyes, and one which I shall probably not see again. Most of these people died long ago. I shall linger over " Mr. R." who was very much alive at the time of writing, and an instructive example of how children should not be brought up. Now that he is dead, this book has become for me a little monument to his memory.

Our first meeting is described in *Looking Back*, and I

find that in *Together* I speak of certain brigand-strains in his character (p.14). This is correct, but hardly forcible enough; primitive strains would be more appropriate. For it did not take me long to notice that the words "discomfort" or "hardship" had no meaning for this boy, whereas certain virtues deemed primeval counted for much. He could put up with anything, with anything except school-work. He loathed his college at Menton and all it contained and all it implied. This, of course, led to a state of chronic friction at home. The parents lamented that since the age of eight his school-reports had been consistently bad; now couldn't I perhaps do something about it? Well, I had observed that single all-consuming passion of his for practical mechanics inherited (or not) from some cave-haunting, tool-fashioning ancestor. Machines and suchlike were his joy, his dream. Impossible to keep him away from smithies and garages and workshops, and whenever he disappeared mysteriously and was required for anything, you were sure to find him at one or the other of these places.

Such being the case, I suggested over and over again to his people that it would be wasting both their money and his time to keep him at school. I went further. I made myself answerable for it that six years hence, at the age of twenty, he would be self-supporting and happy, with a permanent interest and an assured position in life. In vain. His father had followed the bent of so many Corsicans: climb into some administrative post, sit tight, and retire as *rentier;* his children should do likewise and must therefore pass the preliminary *baccalauréat* examination in some college or lycée. Accordingly René, growing ever more resentful, was nailed down in Menton till the fateful day approached. He failed to pass, and even this did not convince the father, who kept him at that institution for the next year's trial. Another miss.

At the age of twenty, when he should have been contented and earning good money, he was at last released from his detested "bahut", morally embittered and intellectually *abruti*. Six and more of the most important years of his life —wasted! Worse than wasted. The boyish tool-making instinct had been done to death by that strain of withering application, and there was nothing to take its place. It was a case of atrophy. His education, the *educing* of such faculties as he possessed, was definitely dislocated even as that of thousands of young Englishmen is being dislocated at this moment. Something should be done about our tragical education-fetich. But—*vex clamantis*. For "soon we shall be doing sums when we might be getting married", as I wrote long ago.

The years between then and his death in 1932 were spent by René in drifting about from one job to another in a state of apathetic indifference, and in ruining his once formidably robust health. He now cared little about health or anything else. *Tant pis:* it was his watchword, his philosophy of life. Towards the end he became usher in a school at Vence near Nice, where his knowledge of games made him a favourite with the boys (he had been captain of the Menton College team). Thence into that sanatorium out of which he was moved in the nick of time to die in a dingy cottage specially hired for that purpose. It is not a pretty way to treat the dying, but the same thing had happened two years earlier to D. H. Lawrence who, at his last gasp (so to speak), was also taken out of that establishment to expire elsewhere.

Both were buried at Vence, though Lawrence's remains were presently shifted to Mexico after an exhumation concerning which I could tell a tale so gruesome that it might give pain to one who is still alive. René nearly shared the same fate. About three years later his father, in a fit of belated tenderness, proposed sending the coffin to Moltifao,

birthplace of all the family; what did I think of the plan? I managed to dissuade him. The idea of a posthumous trip from Vence to Corsica would not have appealed to René. Let him rest where he lies! In any case he cannot rest there much longer, since his bones will be ousted to make room for some newcomer. It is not a pretty way to treat the dead, but the same thing would have happened at Moltifao sooner or later.

Moltifao . . . now I wonder how many of our English tourists have been there? Or rather: have any of them ever heard of the place? It lies off their tracks.

Memories of walks and talks with René were clinging to me as I entered it for the first time on the 20th August, 1937. Both parents were there, and I commend the view from the windows of their home. One soon realizes that Corsican cliff-scenery distils a magic peculiar to itself. It is more fairy-like and benignant than that of the Alps; more *intimate*. Those crags are saturated with luminous vibrations such as are never seen further North. Glancing out of that window I beheld a confusion of pinnacles and ravines as theatrical as any of them, quite fantastic and yet, somehow or other, familiar; where had I seen it before? It was a stage-decoration in some brigand-opera like Fra Diavolo—enough.

I am glad that Orioli, in his *Adventures of a Bookseller*, speaks well of my friend. "René was one of the most companionable and delightful youngsters I have met in my life. He used to talk to me about his two visits to the Vorarlberg; he gave me such a craving to see that place that later on I had to go there. I was terribly sorry to hear of his death. He died in the early spring (*this is not quite correct*) of 1932 at Vence, and Norman went there to be with him. There are some people who ought never to die. René was one of them."

P.S. Here are a few corrections to the text of *Together*—omitting ten or twelve minor ones:

p. 17, line 11 from bottom. I must have been fuddled, confusing the brothers Grimm with Andersen.

p. 52, line 2 from top. *For* this as *read* that is.

p. 97, line 3 from bottom. These lines are said to be by Goethe, which I did not know in spite of an overdose of him at a German school.

p. 165, line 13 from bottom. Zurich. There is also the village of Zurigo on Malta, once famous for its blue-eyed people. Probably a prehistoric root, both Malta and Zurich being neolithic stations.

p. 166, line 16 from bottom. Forty metres is too high; forty feet too low.

p. 177, line 6 from bottom. *Delete* not.

p. 182, last line. *For* left *read* right.

p. 217, line 11 from top. Dean Ramsay. I cannot find the reference. It must be in some other local Memoirs.

p. 218, line nine from bottom. *For* five *read* six.

ALONE

Twelve extracts (pp.)

Were I forced to spend the remaining years of life on some desert island with no companion save one of my own books—unenviable fate!—I should choose *Alone*. A nostalgic and multiherbal fragrance hangs about those pages. They conjure up a legion of friendly ghosts—memories that are fading away, towns and villages never to be revisited, voices that I cannot well hope to hear again. The book is too short for my taste; I would have it longer. One craves to savour more keenly the pleasures of those days and to discover yet more details, however insignificant, of what befell during the months when, at the age of fifty, I exhaled the last breaths of an inconstant youth by the wayside of a beaten track in Italy. There are

moments, like the present one, when the yearning for that past life grows insistent and hard to bear. On such occasions what's to be done? Why, close the book. Be the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears.

Nearly the whole of *Alone* appeared in sixteen periodical instalments (1918–1920) in that *Anglo-Italian Review* which was edited by my old friend Edward Hutton to whom the book was dedicated. This monthly being run on economical lines he could not afford to pay me more than three pounds or guineas an article; it meant a good deal during that impecunious time in Paris of which there is a short record here (p.).

The *Evergreen* Edition is the only one I have at hand, and here are one or two corrections:

p. 26. What I said about the Merle Blanc restaurant at Monte Carlo no longer holds good. Change of management.

p. 33. That wonderful agave-plant is now gone. Good specimens of *medio-picta* in the Jardin Exotique at Monaco.

p. 112, line 10 from top. *For* gentle *read* genteel.

p. 127, line 14 from top. *For* only *read* one.

p. 151, line 14 from top. *For* or *read* and.

p. 221. Ramage visited Alatri in 1828 and could not have seen the walls, as they were not laid bare till 1843.

p. 226. Footnote. The first of these two megalithic structures is *not* visible from the sea.

p. 232, line 11 from bottom. *For* about *read* but.

These are a few of them. There are twice as many misprints in the *Evergreen* Edition as in the original one, with which I have just compared it.

HOW ABOUT EUROPE

Six extracts (*pp.*)

One does not shake books, even small ones like this, out of one's sleeve; nor yet without incurring certain expenses.

Besides a mass of newspapers and periodicals, nearly one hundred authors had to be bought and consulted—partly in a quest for fresh information and partly to corroborate opinions already formed. This cost me between thirty-five and forty pounds.

How about Europe requires to be periodically brought up to date. Modifications are necessary here and there, since life will never be at a stand-still.

Returning to England after a long absence, I note certain changes for the better The men are more alert than they were; children healthier in spite of the War; and the women better-mannered, better-looking, and better dressed: this last being in part the result of uniforms, which prevent some of them from displaying bad taste in the selection of clothes. Society has become pleasantly elastic; more intimacy, less snobbery and frumpishness. Literature reflects our national troubles, while private literary plagues like Jimmie Douglas and Joynson-Hicks have been eliminated by the merciful hand of time.

I am not in love with architectural innovations, though good work has been done also in this line. Certain squares should have been left unscarred; if such vandalism had threatened the Place Vendôme in Paris a public outcry would have forced the Ministry of Fine Arts to intervene and rescind the project, as actually happened at Versailles. Now, instead of seemly mansions each with its own associations, we have barracks for the stowage of our bureaucratic octopus; uglier things were never reared by man. We are wrecking our own inheritance. The destruction of places like Devonshire and Chesterfield House was an outrage, a job which might have been left to the Germans.

Such documents in stone, the produce of our hands, should be respected; whence this lack of pride in our achievements? We seem to have more reverence for the deeds of men than for their works; why? The spirit of

ten thousand heroic soldiers can be replaced in a generation; what shall replace the spirit of Park Lane, so orderly and yet diversified, so English to the core? Could nothing have been done by that *London Society*, which concerns itself with "the beauty of the Capital City, the preservation of its old charms, and the careful consideration of its new developments"? Up to a few years ago the grace of the eighteenth century was lingering in abundant measure. Since then, this harmony has been progressively smothered under a *salade russe* of hybrid horrors, and the day may dawn when commercial rapacity coupled with a lymphatic indifference to beauty and tradition—Philistinism, in short—will have reduced London to the condition of Sparta where, in spite of its immense power, hardly a stone, says Thucydides, will be worth preserving. (He was right. Nothing is left.)

A well-worn theme. . . .

At the risk of offending certain readers who have already complained I must stick to what I said on p. 261 about the Romans. After thinking and observing and reading and talking as much as is good for any man of seventy-five I am driven to the conclusion that the Romans did a disservice to mankind when they introduced Christianity. The result of my reflections is that I can discover nothing original in that patchwork compilation, nothing that was not said in earlier days and sometimes in nobler language. A conspectus of Christian tenets, giving chapter and verse whence they were drawn, will be found in works like McCabe's *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*. By their fruits ye shall know them. This gospel of brotherly love, one of several, has been planted in our lands for two thousand years. Will it ever bear fruits more palatable or nutritious than those of to-day?

In a suggestive book lately published (Oscar Levy: *The Idiocy of Idealism*) the author traces the origins of botl

Hitlerism and Bolshevism to the Bible—to the Jews, as he prefers to say. I agree with him. The first, he argues, has its roots in the Chosen-People and Pure-Race nonsense with which the Old Testament is saturated (good specimens in Ezra and Nehemiah) and which was eagerly sucked up by those passionate Bible-readers, the Germans, who twisted it into their contemptible Herrenvolk doctrine. The second has its roots in that envy of the rich which crops up repeatedly in the New Testament (woe unto you that are rich, etc.; it is easier for a camel, etc.; conveniently contrary texts, as usual, are at hand). Would it be right to say that Christianity is based to an overwhelming extent on envy of the rich and glorification of the proletariat, that Bolshevism is based on Christianity even as Hitlerism is based on the Hebrew Prophets? If right, then the Romans must be held responsible for importing the ancestor of these two pests. Mithraism, a worthier creed, ran that ancestor a close second for a while; then proved too reasonable for the neurotic and vulgarized soul of contemporary Rome.

A propos of such things, the thought has sometimes occurred to me that certain free-thinking friends may presently have occasion to fear that I went to my grave a *demi-vierge* where matters of belief are in question. I should not care to die a *demi-vierge* in any sense of that word. Let me try to console them by saying that God, to my mind, did not invent us and our world but that we invented Him. Nothing new in this; *timor fecit deos*. Also that the universe has always existed and always will exist. Here is a bigger pill to swallow; alternative ones are bigger still. That there should ever have been an act of creation on the part of some Supreme Being is for me pure anthropomorphism. Our childlike habit of manufacturing Gods to explain what we do not understand! Lovers of the Starry Host may torment themselves with conundrums about its

Maker : why not ? I have a sufficiency of other occupations. In my eyes the ever-changing Cosmos has lain serenely distended without beginning or end since pre-adolescent days (*Together*, p. 54), and by this time I am more than ever tired of " Great Beings " and their conjuring tricks . . .

How About Europe was privately printed at Florence about 1928—I have no copy here to decide the date—and in the Bodoni type which is no great favourite of mine, though some of those Paduan editions like the two-volume Virgil could not be comelier. When this issue was exhausted an English commercial one appeared, a chaste volume of which I likewise possess no specimen. This was followed by reprints in the Phœnix and now Pelham Library series. The Americans (Harpers) brought the book out as " Good-bye (? Farewell) to Western Culture "—a title more alluring and intelligible to their public than its first one. It must have been an attractive production to judge by a copy bound in red morocco, which the publishers were kind enough to send me.

Our reviewers did not take kindly to the book. This is hardly surprising in view of its matter and manner, and I was hoping, though in vain, that some of them would try to trip me up over my facts. One of the longest and best notices—by " best " I mean of course the most favourable —was by Arnold Bennett who, however, did not approve of my saying that nine-tenths of the reformers of humanity had been mischief-makers or humbugs. He thought it a little unfair. Well, one must make allowances. Bennett was always an optimistic sort of creature and disposed to see the bright side of things, especially after dinner. He also said, I think, that " every Englishman should read this book ".

So he should.

And he won't.

P.S. May I draw attention to the last three words ?

Many of us would have written " But he won't ". I have said somewhere that *but* is the most debilitating and misused monosyllable in our language. Try the experiment and you will see that a written passage grows more emphatic in proportion as *buts* are omitted—save in conversations, where their use and even abuse is always legitimate.

THEY WENT

Four extracts (pp.) from *They Went*, the writing of which was concluded at Menton after the war and when I was feeling comfortable again. It had been begun at St. Malo two years earlier, but interrupted owing to lack of food. " Some of us are supposed to produce our best efforts under the stimulus of privations ; such a state of affairs paralyses my initiative. I must be well fed, like those mousing cats who capture mice not to still the pangs of hunger but for sport. No starving cat will throw its soul into the task of sitting in front of a mouse-hole motionless hour after hour, for the fun of possibly seeing a mouse emerge. Hunger has made it listless and apathetic ; it drifts away. Even so, here in Paris, I drifted away from *Theophilus*."

Theophilus : that was the original title which the then publishers changed into the present cheap and nasty one for purposes of publicity, I suppose. They cannot have objected on principle to a proper name as a book-title, since it was they who published *Nicholas Nickleby* and those others. I never see the words " *They Went* " without a little feeling of nausea.

This story of the semi-legendary Princess Ahès was so well engraved on my mind that its twenty chapters were written in the following order : 9, 12, 3, 13, 5, 7, 16, 20, 11, 1, 8, 18, 2, 6, 17, 19, 15, 4, 10, 14. Even so *South Wind* was begun at the present sixteenth chapter and carried to

the conclusion, then continued from the first to the fifteenth. To begin writing a novel at the beginning and end at the end does not strike me as a sound plan. The characters are apt to run away with you; one is also liable, they tell me, to "get stuck", a state of affairs which is unintelligible to me.

I thought it strange that the reviewers of this book should not have recognized its affinity with Lalo's *Roi d'Ys* or Peacock's *Misfortunes of Elphin*. Generally speaking they are quite well informed on such points, albeit a good many of them suffer from inadequate equipment of another kind. Their vision is not wide enough, their human sympathy too shallow. Let me explain my meaning. To judge of a man's writing on its literary merits is one part of the critic's business and one part only, seeing that a book is both a mental product and a social one. A knowledge of the British Museum Library will never suffice to make a respectable reviewer. He must have a knowledge of life, of men and their ways; a fair dose of personal worldly experience. This is what they sometimes lack, and it accounts for a certain thinness, a certain anaemic quality, in their appraisals.

Altogether, a little more warmth in both directions would not be amiss. One thinks of the tepid notices which greeted works like Strachey's *Portraits in Miniature*: it called for the heartiest praise. One thinks of the tepid notices greeting some of to-day's printed abortions which Anatole France would have classed as "hors de la littérature": they call for the heartiest abuse. And then—is it justifiable to approach all the writers from one and the same angle, with an unchanging set of predetermined opinions? Should a reviewer be what he sometimes is, a mentor with a fixed point of view? Certainly he should, where mere questions of intellectual discipline, of good or bad writing, straight or crooked thinking, are involved.

There he stands on firm ground. Beyond this province the canons are variable, and he is the critic who discovers and applies the right one. Reviewers might also raise the art to a higher level by refusing to write for the half-civilized, by treating them as non-existent. That feat is hard to accomplish, as I know from experience at the *English Review*.

Ford Maddox Hueffer—whatever he may have called himself afterwards—made the reputation of that paper, though he was such an indifferent man of business that he would have ended in ruining it commercially. He had an infectious enthusiasm and flair for literature besides being a fluent writer and talker, and one who could lie most pleasantly. No doubt he thought a good deal of himself, as do many others and with less reason. Later on, in Paris, he grew so fat and Buddhistic and nasal that a dear friend described him as an animated adenoid. Adenoid or no, he remained good company. When he married Violet Hunt I thought that lively person would go through his self-complacency like a needle. Not at all. He sat down on her like an octopus.

Then Austin Harrison stepped into his place and an American has taken the trouble to catalogue the articles and book-notices I produced under that distasteful regime, while omitting one or two, such as the review of a volume on Arabic music, a queer little treatise in a queer binding, which I am sorry to have sold. A few of these things are included here (pp.). I managed during this period to hit out now and then and say what I thought, while becoming more and more—how shall we say ?—more and more venial as the months rolled by.

There was no help for it. Harrison, for instance, would come to me with a worried look on his face and say: " This is awful. My father's written a book. Yes, another book, and I daren't give it to any of our people to review

because they would simply cut it to pieces. Would you mind very much? I know you can't stand his theories, but you'll try to say something nice about it, won't you? It would make him ever so happy. And the poor old boy can't last much longer anyhow." Accordingly, instead of letting myself go, I was obliged to search for a few grains of common sense in the chaos of Frederic's positivistic balderdash. Or Sidney Colvin would write imploring me to be gentle with a young lady-friend who was sending us her first volume of poems for review. What could I do, having dined with him the week before? And over all hung the sword of Damocles (for a monthly should be run on a sound financial basis), the all-too-reasonable argument of the publishers, "If you flay our authors you won't get our ads."

Dirty work. And not over-paid.

OLD CALABRIA

Nine extracts (*pp.*).

I first went to Calabria in 1907 and alone. Since those days I have been to the country many times partly alone and partly, on eight occasions, with friends English or Italian, my longest stay there being with Eric in 1911. The last visit was in 1936 when, as early as the 4th October, we were snowed up in the forest region at the chapel of the Madonna di Pollino. I have never been there in the winter season.

This is what I should call a full-bodied book. It was published in 1915. The writing occupied me for a good number of years and some of the chapters, such as those on Dragons and on African Intruders, on Milton, on Southern Saintliness and on Pythagoras, called for a certain amount of research and thinking.

I am more than ever convinced that my explanation of the dragon-myth, for all its seeming strangeness, is the

correct one. Or will somebody formulate an alternative theory which covers all the ground as mine does? In McDonald's Bibliography I gave some supplementary facts to which might be added that a dragon guarded the fountain of Dirce at Thebes, that the child of Lycurgus of Nemea was killed by a fountain-dragon, and other tales of this kind that have sprung up in various parts of the world. This chapter should be read slowly, if read at all, and I think it would be an improvement if it had opened with the last paragraph of the previous one. As to Pythagoras—one might note what Diogenes Laertius (VIII, 9) tells us about his asceticism and hatred of normal sexual life. It fits in with the rest of his spiritual equipment.

A great part of *Old Calabria* was written during that spell of acute financial depression which preceded my appointment as Assistant Editor of the *English Review*; whereafter my affairs began to straighten themselves out again. Strange places one used to inhabit—in the King's Cross district, near St. Giles', in Chiswick Lane, at Richmond, or in the back room at 298 Kew Road. I happen to remember that it was there, in Kew Road, that I wrote the chapter entitled "A Mountain Festival" and also remember wondering, as I wrote and looked out of my window—even as I am doing at this very moment—whether I should ever contrive to see that festival again. In those days I succeeded. What about now?

Portions of the book have appeared as articles in English and American periodicals, and the chapter about the "Angel of Manfredonia" was published as a booklet by the Windsor Press of San Francisco. It astonished me, seven years before the book appeared, that I could not persuade any English Editor to accept the chapter on Milton, which records what is surely an important discovery in the domain of English letters. Perhaps it was too important for them; perhaps they were horrified to find themselves face to face with the

proof that *Paradise Lost* was a plagiarism, a "transfusion in general and in particular", of a contemporary and hitherto undiscovered Italian source; perhaps—who knows?—they thought the article was a complicated hoax on my part. The *Atlantic Monthly* came to my rescue and printed it in November, 1908.

Since that time another, and the only known other, copy of Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* has come to light and found its way, *via* the American Embassy in Rome, into the Library of Harvard College. I have mentioned this fact on pages 56–57 of *Looking Back*, a book which contains some further notes on Calabria scattered about the text. An entertaining account of a recent visit to that country will be found in Orioli's *Moving Along*.

During those last trips I gathered some fresh details on the subject of road-building, folklore, the anti-malaria campaign, on Sibaris and the disappearance of local costumes and deforestation and such-like. The prospect of being unable to return to those scenes is so depressing that I am not in the mood for saying anything about them.

There are numerous misprints, such as *youth* for *south* and *sacred* for *scared*. A few have been corrected in two other publications; remaining ones can wait. It is now summer-time, and I ought to be in Calabria instead of talking about it.

Reviewers on the whole were favourable, some of them laudatory. One or two of the genteel variety seemed to be a little hurt at the materialistic tone of "Southern Saintliness". They would have liked me to take a more spiritual point of view in regard to these queer events, in other words, to allegorize facts instead of letting them speak for themselves. The spiritual interpretation of unpalatable facts is not to my taste, signifying, as it does, that an intelligent observation of them has been thrown out of gear. The delightful word "spiritual" is not to be trusted; on

occasion it allows " muddle-headed " to step into its shoes. I used it in this sense just now when speaking of the aspirations of Pythagoras, that exemplary old muddler.

Another critic made a sage remark. In some copies we had reproduced Baedeker's excellent map of the country—reproduced it so badly that one could make nothing out of it. He wrote: " There are one or two good jokes in this book, and the best one is the author's map."

EXPERIMENTS

Here are eight extracts (pp.) from *Experiments*.

My privately printed edition of this book: that was in itself an experiment, a most trying one. It was my first serious attempt at this kind of thing and engulfed me in an ocean of troubles. Nobody at the printer's place knew a word of English, with the consequence that the proof-reading of so much matter drove me nearly to despair. Then the size of the book—I wanted octavo, he insisted on the unwieldy quarto; trouble about the flimsy paper which he vowed was hand-made (and so it may be); trouble with binders, trouble with the packing of copies and the keeping of correct accounts with buyers who had paid for theirs, with those who had not, with others who would not, necessitating a vast *dossier* of addresses and correspondence —all to be done single-handed, save that whenever a sufficient pile of parcels had accumulated, I would call for a small boy who hired a wheel-barrow in which the consignment was trundled to the post office and sent off, an operation which never took less than an hour to perform, seeing that every one of them had to be registered.

One lives and learns. By the time of my third venture in this line I had become an expert. And it was quite a lucrative business, in spite of some debts which have remained unpaid to this day and were contracted, of course, by rich clients; the poor and medium rich always

paying in full. All too soon the fall of the pound sterling made the manufacture of such books in Italy rather hazardous from a financial point of view.

Indeed, if it were twenty years ago, I should have given this advice to any writer of my particular calibre: print your book in a small signed edition handsomely and expensively (I charged three guineas for *Experiments* and it was quickly sold out; a copy was catalogued not long ago at sixty dollars); then, when this edition is exhausted or begins to show signs of falling off, sell it outright to your publisher for whatever you can get. I have made a calculation proving that if I had continued with the old royalty system my income from books would be less than half of what it actually is. One begins to understand cases like that of W. H. Hudson and other respectable writers who lived and died in relative poverty. I should never give such advice, however, to a really popular author (private editions are not worth his while) nor to a writer of any kind at the present moment, when the craze for these expensive books has subsided.

The American edition of *Experiments* is the best. It contains the Dedication, Book-reviews, and the Magnus pamphlet, one or the other of which is missing elsewhere. There is new and valuable material in this version of *D. H. Lawrence and Maurice Magnus*. The original issue appeared a year before *Experiments* in 1924, and gave no trouble. This was a little thing, easily packed and posted, never registered, and despatched only on receipt of five shillings or its American equivalent. After being discreetly advertised by myself it went off well. The third edition was stereotyped and cannot therefore be mistaken for the other two although, to humour certain readers, the original date 1924 and some of the original misprints of the first were re-instated....

One is reluctant to warm up a cold broth, but in a recent

American publication likely to appear soon, we are told, on this side of the Atlantic, there are a few statements about that Magnus business which call for correction, if I am not to remain misrepresented in the eyes of its readers. I hope it will not sound egotistical when I say :

1. No. The playful caricature of myself in Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod* is not the reason why I took up arms against him. The reason was that he had distorted the character of Maurice Magnus, a dead friend of mine whose memory I wished to defend. *Aaron's Rod* was ancient history by that time ; besides I am far too tough to care tuppence what anybody thinks or says or writes about me. To Hell with them !

2. I am accused of not helping Magnus in his distress. Nobody likes to be held up to posterity as one who deserts his friends in their hour of need, and this suggestion would be offensive were it not contradicted by the author himself who in another place (*Esquire*, December, 1941) speaks of " Douglas' loyalty and generosity to old friends ". I cannot reconcile these two aspects of my nature ; which of them shall go by the board ? Or did I single out for ill-treatment one of the oldest and best of friends, after helping him financially when he was still a stranger to myself and even his name unknown ?

3. " It is no credit to Norman that he accepted a gift of £100 to write the pamphlet, from a rich woman who had a grudge against Lawrence." Will the lady please step forward, or can any one else divulge the origin of this legend ? It was myself who bore the grudge against Lawrence for his ignoble travesty of Magnus : hence my *Plea for Better Manners*. There may well have been ladies in the same case, indeed there must have been, and more than one of them, since they have lately published their personal comments on his cat-like disposition. My own biliary secretion was amply sufficient for that particular essay,

though a hundred pounds might go a little way towards the production of a second one.

4. " Norman had the crust to abuse Lawrence for not being a gentleman." Of course he was not a gentleman. Now let us tell the truth, which is this : friendly confidences were out of the question with Lawrence ; nothing was sacred ; all was grist to his literary mill. He was one of those mortals to whom one must never show kindness unless one wants to be stabbed in the back afterwards. I have given an example of this in *Looking Back*, and here is one of several more. The Compton Mackenzies had imprudently gone out of their way to make Lawrence happy and comfortable in Capri. They were rewarded in due course by the publication of two short stories about themselves and their household, both scurrilous and one of them libellous into the bargain. *C'était plus fort que lui* ; that is all one can say. Writes the man who knew him as well as anybody : " as a friend he was so incalculable and often so disappointing, so disheartening, that now and then I wonder how many of those who knew him well were really sorry when he died."

For the rest, Lawrence and his idiosyncracies would not be worth powder and shot if they were an isolated case. They are not an isolated case ; they are symptomatic. We have a brood of such people, and broader issues are involved —social issues. What are we to think of this school of evil-speaking, this vilification of men and women from whom one has accepted benefits ? Nothing ; save that it would be considered bad form in a community of scullery-maids and stable-boys.

THREE OF THEM

Five extracts (*pp.*).

There is an interval of thirty-eight years between the first and the last of these three pieces. I forget whether *One*

Day appeared anywhere before Nancy Cunard's sumptuous Edition (Hours Press, 1929) with a picture of myself seated at the Temple of Bassae. The copies should become rather valuable, for all her remaining stock of the book is at Réanville in German hands; can it ever come to the surface again? An American Review called *Travel* printed *One Day* (November, 1929) under the title "Farewell to Athens", and there is a French translation (Echanges, Paris, June, 1930).

This little book had an odd genesis. Early in 1920 a suggestion reached Mr. Venizelos, then Prime Minister of Greece, that a volume dealing with his country in the manner of my *Old Calabria* would be an attractive addition to its travel literature and that I was the proper person to write it. The result of this suggestion? Venizelos was delighted. And what would I be pleased to accept by way of remuneration? Three hundred pounds. Done! Government money, of course.

The Greek Minister in Rome was instructed to hand me this sum together with certain letters of recommendation and travel-facilities; which he did. This old gentleman, by the way, astonished me not only by his remarkably handsome presence, but by his local knowledge. I happened to mention the respectable but quite obscure street in which I was staying. To my surprise he knew it, and the shortest way to reach it from his Legation would be by following, etc., etc. "It's a little hobby of mine," he said. "Try me with some more of them." I gave the names of two or three sombre alleys in the Trastevere region which I frequented in days of old. He placed them all correctly—an unusual accomplishment, even for a native.

Arrived at Athens, I first found quarters at the British School where I had been an occasional visitor in 1892, as recorded in *Looking Back*. The fare just then left something to be desired, but the library . . . that library! Here was

Greece from many angles; Greece, I soon realized, from too many angles. I was appalled at the task before me. Would I ever be able to assimilate all this material and fashion it into a readable book, seeing that *Old Calabria* had taken several years to write and many months of weary research? Then the language which I had chattered to my satisfaction in 1892 and which was now necessary for travelling about the country—the language: where had it gone? Gone the way of Russian which I spoke and wrote fluently in 1896 and had meanwhile clean forgotten (if only one could forget certain other things as easily!) A teacher was engaged, and after a course of six or eight lessons it was apparent that I was too old to learn, too old or too stupid—or both.

I had made a miscalculation; the Greeks were never to have their *Old Hellas* or whatever it might have been called. They got *One Day*, and at quite a reasonable price, if cold statistics can prove anything. Let me see: there are about twelve million Greeks on the mainland and islands, or domiciled in Egypt, America, and elsewhere. Three quarters of them are tax-payers of one kind or another. Nine million men have therefore contributed the fraction of a farthing each (if my arithmetic is not at fault) towards the production of a book not imposing perhaps as to bulk, but crammed with shrewd and suggestive observations, exhaling a candid love of their race and fatherland and a reverence for its traditions; a book written by a countryman of their national hero Byron and in a style, moreover, which no critic will call displeasing: all this for the fraction of a farthing! Not a bad bargain, from the Greek point of view. And so much for the genesis of *One Day*.

Glancing once more through these pages I find there is a mistake on p. 32 where I speak of Hymettus as being timbered in the days of Sophocles. It is described as treeless in the *Critias* of Plato who hints, however, at the

former existence of woodlands on this hill. Page 28, line 13 from bottom, *for* aloud *read* loud.

About *Nerinda* there is nothing to say beyond what is already printed in the " Author's Note ", part of which is reproduced here on p. It was first published in *Unprofessional Tales*, then by Orioli of Florence, then by some American firm whose name I forget. Misprint: p. 119, line 14 from top, *for* not *read* but.

The *Herpetology, etc.*, written in 1891, takes one back—back into a Germany different from that of to-day. There in only one extract here (p.), on the Alpine newt; I should have preferred the description of *Rana arvalis*, an interesting beast, but it is too long.

The reader may be relieved to learn that certain other biological papers are not at hand, else he might have been favoured with something about the Theory of Sexual Selection, or the Distribution of the Beaver in Norway. Why bother about the Beaver in Norway?

Why not? Knowledge is power, they say. Knowledge is not only power; it is good fun.

SOUTH WIND

Eight extracts (*pp.*).

The last edition of this book appeared in 1942 and contains at least twenty-five misprints, some of them sufficiently annoying—this, in spite of all the trouble taken by the publisher and myself to avoid such things.

The short Introductory Note I wrote for it led to some correspondence; firstly, with Hughes Massie and Co., my agents. I find I was wrong in saying that an omission on Mr. Massie's part was the reason why this book was not copyrighted in the United States. It appears that Mr. Massie did his utmost to induce American publishers to take up the book, but failed; and that is why it could not be copyrighted. I owe them an apology for this. I will correct

the error—together with the misprints, if possible—in the next edition of the book, and in mentioning it here I am taking the earliest opportunity of rectifying matters.

Secondly, there was an interchange of letters with Mr. Bennett Cerf of the New York *Modern Library* series which is printed in *The Bookseller* of 29th April last. From his long letter one thing is clear. On its thirty-sixth line we are told that the Modern Library " agreed to pay Norman Douglas a courtesy royalty of 5 cents a copy on the Modern Library edition of *South Wind*". Another thing is also clear. The statement goes on to say " When Mr. Klopfer and I took over the Modern Library in 1925 we continued to pay Mr. Douglas this 5 cents a copy till July 1st, 1932." As I have received nothing since then I should like to ask Mr. Cerf again : When is he going to pay me the eleven years' royalties which on his own showing he still owes me ? If the figures he gives are correct, these should amount to about three thousand three hundred dollars. When ?

The mention of America reminds me that a correspondent out there, unknown to myself, sent me an Index he had prepared for *South Wind*, an astonishing document. Another gentleman, also unknown to me, drew up an imaginary map of Nepenthe marking every spot named in the text. It was an ingenious piece of work, and I wish I had these two things here. They are in enemy hands together with my other worldly possessions—yes, all of them, old and new, great and small—and who knows whether I shall ever see them again ? Or my friends of long standing ? A disheartening state of affairs. . . .

I sometimes wonder how many copies of this book I have signed for friends and others. For I do not share the prejudice of some writers against this practice which gives pleasure to the recipient and does me no harm, although one is sometimes taken aback at finding these " autograph

copies" in the catalogues of second-hand booksellers. In such cases, if you like, you may profit by the opportunity of buying back your own book at five times its original price, thanks to the autograph; and then sit down to meditate upon the fruits of misplaced civility.

And how many letters have I received from kind folk who took a fancy to *South Wind*? I am more than grateful for such encouragement and almost tempted to add, meekly, and as it were *sotto voce*, that there are methods other than verbal of proving to a writer that you appreciate his work; methods which, alas, have never been employed in my case; methods of which every author will approve; methods, in short, which deserve to be widely adopted on the part of well-disposed readers. For instance, how would this be:

Dear Norman Douglas,

I had a stroke of luck this morning. I hooked and landed an 18 pounder, and then found I simply could not resist the temptation of sending him straight on to you. Why? Because I have been reading your *Playing with Fire* for the fiftieth time and like it better than ever. Surely that is an adequate reason?

He should reach you some time to-morrow. As you said you were changing your address I am sending him c/o your publisher, and will you please see that he does not get away with the parcel on the pretext of your being out of town?

I hope you will like the fish. He is fresh run, and this is more than can be said of

Yours always gratefully,

. . . . . .

Or this:

Dear Sir,

I am in the City and so busy that I have hardly ever time to look at anything except the papers. But last week-end a friend insisted on my reading your *Pauline in Pyjamas*, and I must confess I have seldom enjoyed anything so much. It did me good.

I daresay there are plenty of people sending letters to thank you for

what you have written. Well, that is not my notion of being even with a man who has given me amusement on your lines. Would you take it very much amiss, I wonder, if I begged you to accept the enclosed cheque for £100? I hope not, because then I should have the satisfaction and delight of thinking that I had contributed towards paying for a drink or two, which you so richly deserve. And please don't trouble to thank me. I don't collect autographs, much as I look forward to the pleasure of meeting you personally one of these days, and the sooner the better so far as I am concerned.

Yours sincerely,

. . . . . .

Or this:

Dear D.,

This is the limit. Last night I shrieked myself hoarse with laughing over your last story about the Armadillo and the Cardinal's niece. What must she have thought. And the Armadillo, pensive and resigned. Now what I say is this. A fellow who can make you laugh so much deserves something for his trouble. And let me tell you I've just thought of something. You know uncle Fred left me his place at Hampstead including that priceless "Library". I've been selling the muck to Snaggs as fast as I can by the cartload. But there's one batch he won't touch. Seven shelves of erotica or whatever you call it. I've looked at some of the drawings. Good God. No wonder he won't touch them. They take some beating. But just your style. The old dodderer used to swear that he spent a life-time over the collection and it was worth anything over two thousand. I ought to warn you that he was a bit of a liar. If he wasn't, so much the better for you. Because the whole lot goes to you by Carter Paterson this afternoon. About a ton of books, I should say. You will want to fix them up in your studio. If you do, no decent man or woman will care to be seen there. That doesn't matter in the least. They don't care to be seen there anyway, do they?

Yours ever,

. . . . . .

Or this:

Dear Sir,

We have pleasure in informing you that a client of this firm lately deceased has bequeathed to you the sum of five thousand pounds in recognition of your services to English literature and on the condition that his name is not to be made known to you.

We are holding this sum at your disposal and shall be pleased to learn your wishes in the matter.

We are, etc.,

. . . . . .

These are the letters which authors ought to receive—and never do.

LOOKING BACK

Seventeen extracts (*pp.*).

The idea of casting an autobiography into this form seems to me a good one. The images vary continuously, whereas certain other books of this kind, however full of interesting information, are apt to be heavy; the matter may be valuable, the manner is tiresome.

Not all the illustrations I sent in were reproduced and this, to my way of thinking, was a mistake. (One or two pictures of myself might well have been omitted). The small additional expense involved would surely have been more than counterbalanced by their worth to the reader, and I feel so strongly on this point that here is a list of them. Frontispiece: Oriental *brûle-parfum*; to face page 107: Lebanon cedars viewed from the Col; p. 141: Crater of Vulcano (from Spallanzani); p. 148: The Weaste, Manchester; p. 238: photo of Helen and Aurore taken together at Petersburg; p. 373: Pilaster of *rosso antico*; p. 381: striped salamander; p. 458: Count Campo Alegre; p. 506: Professor Leydig. Whoever cares to take the trouble will find these additional illustrations in a British Museum copy of this book, the receipt of which has been acknowledged by the authorities.

If I am over-conscientious in some matters, that is a fault in the right direction. Anyhow, and apart from a few misprints which are not worth mentioning, I should like to correct or amplify one or two statements, as I may never again have an opportunity of doing so.

P. 75. Uchtomsky. *Oukhtomsky (Prince E. E.) Voyage en Orient: Grèce, Egypte, Inde*, 1890–91, 178 *illusts.*, *imp. 4to.*, *Paris*, 1893. Note the year of publication. This must be the man. My report was written in 1894.

P. 201. Graeff. *See* Frazer's *Pausanias*, vol. II, pp. 98, 99.

P. 256. de Sade. Generally known as Marquis though I believe he was also a Count. It is a pity we possess not a single portrait of him. Long years of imprisonment, depriving him of that social life and feminine companionship for which his over-sexed and imaginative nature was craving, may have helped to develop "sadistic" tendencies, and forced him to convert the licentious acts of his youth into words.

P. 289. Massy-Mainwaring. Wrong. He did not present the museum to the nation, although he presented many things to the museum.

P. 311. Rolfe. Wrong. He lived in the open boat but died on shore.

P. 337. Cunard. Wrong. Her book is called not *Colour* but *Negro*, a monstrous and most informative tome, to which I contributed a short letter.

P. 433. Turanian stock. Can this term be applied to the Far East as I intended? "Those glorious blossoms that trail up the trees yonder and writhe about their branches, scattering here and there in a shower of purple blossoms—you see them? I carried the young plant on my own back, together with many others, out of the far-away land of the Colocynthians" (*In the Beginning*, p. 53). This is the Wistaria, a Chinese plant. And p. 18 of the same book: "He found it rich sport to see these superior people scuttling out of their pink towers and crawling for refuge into tufts of feather-cane whose matted roots, on such occasions, shivered and swayed like wood on stormy water, but never cracked." This refers to the Japanese

custom of jumping into bamboo thickets during earthquakes.

P. 481. Tam Edward (*not* Edwards). Wrong. He was born at some place like Portsmouth, according to Smiles, who has given the text of his speech at Yarlet, which he wrongly describes as being near Liverpool....

This book ran smoothly off my pen; I hope it reads smoothly. Yet it must have drained my mentality up to a point, since for the following ten years I was able to write nothing—not a line save a short Introduction to a cheap American Edition of *Old Calabria*, and that only because I could then make it a condition that the publisher should reproduce the Index of the English Edition on which I had set my heart, and which had been omitted from an earlier cheap American reprint.

For ten long years I felt as if I had written myself out, which did not prevent me from being assailed by the persistent and annoying question "Why aren't you writing another book?" Why don't you write something: these words have given me food for thought, and I will proceed to reveal the upshot of that thinking for the benefit of fellow-sufferers.

It is obvious that persons who ask such a question can never have written what I call a book, else they would not ask it. They think, no doubt, that writing books is an occupation like planting potatoes, an occupation which you can lay down and take up again at your pleasure. And I daresay the labour or trouble involved in the two tasks is the same. There may be no difference in degree. There is a difference in kind of which these good folk seem to be unaware, and a more appropriate simile—an amazingly close parallel, indeed—has often occurred to me, namely, the analogy which can be drawn between literary production and bodily evacuation.

Will the reader, instead of being shocked, kindly note

the significant fact that both processes conform to these rules (1) when you possess the material you may give, and (2) you cannot give what you do not possess. Offer the poorest man the wealth of Crœsus to relieve his bowels then and there, and he will reply with a sad smile: "Alas, you have caught me in a bad moment. There is nothing at hand in that department of my body. Have a little patience, and then we'll see." Says the author rich or poor: "A thousand apologies! There is nothing available in my brain just now. Have a little patience, and then we'll see." I am expressing myself in the politest language at my command.

Let us ask whether this strikingly sound allegory allows itself to be pursued further. It will hold good, at least, to this extent that any doctor, and even common sense or your own physical comfort, will tell you that the excretory act should not be interrupted once begun. Even so a book, once begun, should be carried on to its end bitter or sweet. Then and then only will you be able to rise to your feet with the satisfactory feeling that you have cast off something in due season, in full measure, and to good purpose.

Curious to observe that the analogy, once you begin to squeeze it, does not behave in the manner of an orange which runs dry on pressure. It yields fresh juice after this fashion: a wise man will wait for the second perestaltic movement, for that final muscular contraction which ensures that everything voidable has been voided for the time being. Should he fail to do so, his health may suffer. And the wise author, after the main load of thought has been discharged, will interpose a spell of concentrated intellectual effort during which he gathers together the remaining loose ends of his material before consigning it definitely to its destination, the public. Should he fail to do so, the book may suffer.

Lastly, and to round off the parable, we have that

distressing phenomenon of laxity or diarrhœa, the case of those unhappy mortals, writers or non-writers, who cover reams of paper with their respective waste products cerebral and organic—the one as worthless as the other. An all-too prevalent complaint ! One knows the virtue of astringent drugs like bismuth and wonders whether a few doses, taken metaphorically, would do any harm to some of our present-day authors.

PANEROS

Here are eight extracts (pp.) from Paneros, a word which should be pronounced Panerôs, even as that delicious Eôthen of Kinglake's is accented not on the first but on the second syllable.

It had a singular origin, this book. A friend collected for publication from his own stock and from mine and from that of others some two hundred culinary recipes of an aphrodisiacal nature. The projected work was called "Venus in the Kitchen", and D. H. Lawrence painted for it a frontispiece depicting an obese, middle-aged woman shovelling something into a kitchen-oven with a small boy or devil (I forget which) at her side—a monstrously anti-aphrodisiac vision, but pure Lawrence. The author of the book was Pilaff Bey.

Pilaff Bey; that was myself. I wrote what I thought was an appetizing Preface with oriental flavour and the thing was ready for the press but never printed, owing to certain financial risks involved. The typescript is now inaccessible, in Italy. If I could at least have my Preface back, it would make a passable addition to these pages.

Well, that started me on the subject, and with my usual "Bookishness" (*Manchester Guardian* of long ago; and not far wrong !) I delved into all the authorities available, beginning with the classical and our own earlier ones. Queer names some of these people have—Helmontius,

Varignana, Weckerus, Lemnius, Pisanellus, Gattinaria and so on. Queer; but authentic in spite of what a friend reports himself as saying to me in one of his books: "My dear boy, before you go any further, let me explain what you are going to do. You are going to tell me about one of your imaginary authors; you have invented that man, as you invented a good many others whom you quote in your books. I quite realise that this system gives your writings a fine veneer of scholarship, but, believe me, you'll be found out one of these days."

Whether the antiquated style of Paneros will give as much pleasure to any reader as it gave trouble to me, who can say? If yes, then his pleasure will have to be considerable.

p. 66. "That most terrestrial of our English mystics": William Blake, who was the reverse of a mystic in many respects.

p. 85. The words in italics *our only reality* are from Godwin's Essay on Sepluchres.

p. 88. King Mausolus a show for hyperboreans. The statuary in the British Museum.

p. 85. "Give love to the young": here begins the coda, opening up another and more spacious vista. I had in mind the amplitude, the humanity, of the concluding pages in the *Hydriotaphia*. To close upon a new note as a kind of afterthought, to broaden out or contrive some stimulating and unexpected elaboration of what went before—that is a literary device as old as the hills; as old, at least, as Plato who made adroit use of it at the tail-end of his *Symposium*. And lovers of Beethoven will recall many instances of his fondness for kindling a fresh spark at the last moment.

Previous to the present edition, there was another privately printed in Florence in the Lungarno Edition. I cannot remember the date or the number of copies, but

the edition was sold, and sold out, at the outrageous price of three guineas a copy. An American edition also exists (McBride).

Note to page 55. Middleton's "buttered crab" may have been the crab-apple. I have not the reference here, and forget the context.

SIREN LAND

Thirteen extracts (*pp.*).

My acquaintance with this stretch of country dates from the end of last and the beginning of this century; for example, the material of the sixth chapter, one of my favourites, was garnered about the year 1902. The present volume opens with an extract from that chapter.

The book itself was begun in May, 1908—"thence, for a little light refreshment, to Nerano; thence to that ill-famed 'House of the Spirits' where my *Siren Land* was begun in the company of one who feared no spirits—victim, already, of this cursed War, but then a laughter-loving child. . . ." Thus I wrote in *Alone*.

The village of Nerano lies near the tail-end of the Sorrentine peninsula, facing South and on the middle heights. If you walk westwards from there under the cliffs of Mount San Costanzo you will presently notice on your left hand a porch which gives access to this still invisible house; a little further on you may look down upon its roof. It stands alone, embowered in olives. At the time of my arrival it was in possession of a malignant spirit known as the *munaciello*, and in consequence of his antics had lain empty and abandoned for years. Maybe the intruder has now been ousted—did my presence in the place contribute to this result?—for I observe that its original saffron colour has turned to pink, which suggests a tenant of some kind.

The small but efficient peasant-boy who in 1908 feared no ghosts was an authentic product of the soil from Termini,

a neighbouring village. He bore the historical name of Amitrano peculiar to these regions, and in another chapter of *Siren Land* I have gone into the derivation of this name and spoken of some former exploits of his clan, now reduced to humble condition. It was not long before he revealed himself as an inexhaustible mine of that lore with which every nook of the district is saturated. *Siren Land* owes much to him, and so does the eighth chapter of *Old Calabria.*

For setting on foot a modest work of this variety what more propitious spot could have been chosen than my retreat among those exquisite surroundings? No friends, no neighbours; olives on every side and the sea far below, with views upon the Siren Islets, the distant mountains of Lucania and the Amalfitan coastline; the smile of that devoted little fellow who would wake me in the mornings with a fresh bouquet of vanilla-scented orchids gathered along the pathway overhead? I must have found myself in responsive mood to the promptings of the *genius loci* when I wrote in the second chapter of *Siren Land*:

"Here, on these odorous Siren heights, far removed from duty's sacred call—for duty has become the Moloch of modern life—it may not be amiss to build a summer hut wherein to undergo a brief period of *katharsis*, of purgation and re-adjustment. For we do get sadly out of perspective with our environment in the fevered North, out of touch with elemental and permanent things; we are for ever looking up-stream. . . . To dream in Siren Land, pursuing the moods and memories as they shift in labyrinthine mazes, like shadows on a woodland path in June; to stroll among the hills and fill the mind with new images upon which to browse at leisure, casting off outworn weeds of thought with the painless ease of a serpent and unperplexing, incidentally, some of those "questions of the day" of which the daily papers nevertheless know nothing—this is

an antidote for many ills. There is repose in Siren Land; there is none of that delirious massing-together in which certain mortals, unable to stand alone, can lean up against one another and so gain, for a moment, a precarious condition of equipoise."

I commenced the book with the passage about the goat-caves, here reproduced on p. —and no wonder, since those caves are quite near at hand. Other walks in the neighbourhood led to Ierate, the " three-peaked rock " of the old geographer Eratosthenes to which I have consecrated several pages of *Alone* and which was then a wilderness of aromatic *maquis* with a crumbling Martello-tower, as lonely a spot as you might wish to find on earth. Nearly every evening we found our way to the deserted beach of Recomone, for bathing and supper. Or else we would wander further afield, up to the sub-alpine woodlands and pastures of Faito, which prompted the reflections here recorded on page , and into every other corner, no matter how remote or difficult of approach, of this favoured territory (and, later on, still further afield).

For months I was alone with this friendly child, learning what is not to be learned out of books and " casting off outworn weeds of thought with the painless ease of a serpent "; it was a cleansing interlude, one of those moments in life which must have left their mark, for even nowadays, after all these years and all their troubles, I never pass along the familiar tracks without a certain little heartache. Here, and during this period, were sown the seeds of *South Wind.*

The young Amitrano gave a good account of himself afterwards, and came to me as cook when I was finishing *South Wind* at the Villa Behring on Capri in 1916. Then he was drafted into the army and died later at home after long suffering, the result of the War. A month before leaving Italy in 1937 I looked up his widow and the child. They

were doing fairly well. They would have been doing better, if he were still alive. . . .

The first edition of *Siren Land* was published in 1911. Its original manuscript consisted of twenty chapters; seven were cut out by the publisher as being "too remote from human interests" and some of this discarded material subsequently found a refuge in *Old Calabria*. From the final settlement of account (30 June, 1919) I learned that 890 copies had been "wasted", in other words pulped—and pulped without my being consulted in the matter. All the satisfaction I got out of him was this: "We regret to find that we did not advise you at the time when we destroyed the sheets. In the ordinary course we should have done so, and we can not understand how we omitted to write to you." Small consolation. One would have liked to buy a few copies to give away.

The book contains some misstatements I should like to correct such as where, on page 100 of the new edition, I credit Addison (1705) with being the first to apply the term "romantic" to natural scenery whereas the priority belongs to John Evelyn in 1654; or where on page 161 I speak of a blue thistle which is no thistle at all; and one or two other slips. The word *solstitial*, on p. 151, should be replaced by *midsummer*.

A new and revised edition by another publisher appeared in 1923, and I have elsewhere noted some of the wondrous misprints it contains, while omitting to mention about a dozen more of them. Here is an important one: page 289, third line from top, *for* different *read* indifferent, and page 308, line 18 from top, *for* wild *read* mild.

Now it struck me that a book of this kind requires an index of subjects and proper names. I suggested writing one, *con amore*, for the sum of five pounds, and on the lines of that drawn up for *Old Calabria*, a month's work which any expert will pronounce to be a businesslike and creditable

performance. The offer was turned down. An index, none the less, was perpetrated by some hack and among its items I remember noticing " Phryne, an artist ". Well, she was obviously an artist in one sense of the word. (Some mistake here. The item does not occur in the copy before me.)

Worse still was the omission of that convenient sketch-map in the first edition on which is marked every place mentioned in the text, and none that are not mentioned. The reproduction of this map, so useful for the reader's guidance, would have cost perhaps a farthing per copy. Truly, some publishers are like God—they move in a mysterious way.

According to McDonald's Bibliography, there are three American editions, based on sheets imported from England. I have seen none of these productions nor, to the best of my recollection, have I yet received one cent from any of the publishers concerned.

LONDON STREET GAMES

Seven extracts (*pp.*).

I can think of little to say about these Games—little that is not contained in the Introduction which is reproduced on p. . The Conclusion is also here (p.) as well as more extracts than the size of the book would seem to warrant. That is because the subject has not only a local but a permanently antiquarian interest. The rising generation of children has never heard of many of these games. If you doubt this, go to the East End as I have done, and ask them !

Some correspondents wrote to correct me, as they thought, about the boys' games or the girls' songs. " That's not the way it goes " or " that's not how we used to sing it " they would suggest, and then proceed to give me their own versions. Both of us are right. Variants are inevitable,

given the size of London and the fact that the songs and game rules are never written down or standardized.

A writer in some Scottish paper signing himself D.—I wish they had sent me the reference—records his own memories of Glasgow Street Games. His names for them differ from mine and he agrees with me about the decline of marbles (see p.) and the influence on children of the cinema and organized games. This is what he says:

"I don't know, but it sometimes seems to me that the child of to-day, instead of making his own amusements, prefers to sit in a stuffy cinema. This is having the effect of hastening the decline of our native Scottish games and vocabulary, and the hideous Americanisms of Hollywood are displacing the Doric everywhere.

"And then, of course, there is the modern craze to 'organize' games. As if a game can be organized; and as if a boy worth his salt wants to have an adult overseer."

This is exactly what I said.

And an American correspondent sent me, in two batches, a noteworthy collection of New York Street Games. I begged him to have it printed somewhere....

These pages, for me, have a strangely rejuvenating virtue:

"Children sit down in a ring and begin saying something about the cat such as Abomnerble Cat. Then B, such as Bloody Cat and so on."

I am puzzled by the relative number of references to Spain. How account for them? The ease with which one can find rimes to this word? Or do they go back to the Peninsular War, to Elizabethan memories lingering by the water-side? Possibly, since the oldest of these things, such as the touch games, date from days before Elizabeth was born; primordial days; days, doubtless, before we began to talk English or even to think of wearing clothes. They are survivals from a dim past. Touch games and their like must

have existed from time immemorial wherever two or three children with independent minds and healthy bodies could gather together.

I fear they are doomed. Progress under various disguises is draining away their life and will end in converting them into anachronisms or curiosities, tales for the erudite, much as the once friendly Dodo was wiped out by another pseudonym of that same Progress and is now a skeleton in a glass case.

And I can see some product of our future mechanized age, some horribly dehydrated apparition calling himself—herself, more likely—by the old-fashioned name of anthropologist, if this book should survive to fall into his hands, poring over its text as we might pore over the narrative of a traveller more inquisitive than the old Dutchman, a narrative describing from personal observation the habits and life-history of that strange fowl of Mauritius. " Street Games ? An unsavoury crowd of imps," he may reflect. " Hardly human. What can their parents have been about ? "

Being a scholar, he will have learned that children of those days were not brought up by insemination and in hatcheries of one class or another, but by what were known as *parents*. " And that accounts for the mischief."

REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS

THE DESIRE FOR MARTYRDOM

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE. Arthur Koestler. Cape. *7s. 6d.*

I FIND IT hard to decide at what element of this novel its author would wish criticism to be directed—at its literary merit, which achieves Dostoievskian insight and stature: at its psychiatry, or at the self which inevitably reveals itself in semi-confessional writing. Earlier in the War I wrote that Koestler showed the clearest insight into the type of problem which confronts imaginative realism. He has preferred to confine his contemporary comment to reportage and quasi-reportage, a wise choice: in the present work he discusses one of the hardest problems for the contemporary writer: that blend of fact and fantasy in the mind of the refugee: that subject of Szobel's drawings. The hardest part of that problem is to differentiate the deliberate lies from the reality which unquestionably exists, in the face of a total absence of eyewitnesses or reliable evidence. Koestler dodges this very astutely over the Jewish massacres, by not differentiating fact from nightmare—the facts are, that hundreds are deported or killed, that Slavek was beaten up—the detail, with it erotic colour and its similarity to the corpse-factory stories, is a part not of history, but of the fear in the exile's mind. Until factual evidence is available, there is no other road for the sensitive writer. He must draw the confused mass that he sees even at the risk of misunderstanding. Koestler has done so brilliantly. From his own experience as a wanted man I would not have thought that he could do so.

His method of treatment is to permit the story of a political refugee to emerge slowly under classical Freudian psycho-analysis, and he intends to illustrate the relation

between Freudian origins and political activity—the quixotism and resistance of Slavek arise out of his projected resistance to his father. A hysterical pseudoparesis (dating from a burn inflicted by the police) is cured at an early stage of analysis, and the subject's feeling of guilt at having betrayed his comrades when in fact he acted with remarkable fortitude is identified with an accidentally realized death-wish against a baby brother. So far, so good —the most convincing feature of the whole thing is that the patient's superficial symptoms (an acute anxiety state, the hysterical palsy) are relieved by analysis, but his psychical dysharmony remains untouched. He enlists as a parachutist and returns to his vomit, after denying the sufficiency of the psychiatric diagnosis. In the end Koestler gives a wholly typical picture of the way in which many patients respond, or fail to respond, to analytical suggestion. The edifice built, he rejects it, brilliant as its construction has been. It is the Dostoievskian destriction of this edifice, ruthless and in itself rational, though it denies rationalism, which marks the highest level Koestler has yet attained. To the analyst, this is failure. Political attitudes cannot be discounted simply by showing their psychological origins. We are left in doubt.

It is hard to criticise the psychiatry of this book. Freud would probably have assented to most of it, and it has clearly been worked up with great zeal and care from Freudian literature. Inevitably it bears the stamp of most lay medical pictures, except those of Dickens, which were based on direct observation. It is rather too classical. The rickety child in a novel must have a big head and a small face *and* a pigeon chest *and* a pot belly *and* bumps on his ribs—he has been mugged up from textbooks, and his correct place is a " pot " in the R.C.S. museum. Least of all in psychiatry with its bewildering interplay of environmental and temperamental responses do classical cases

Sickert
LILLIAN BROWSE
Illustrated. 21/–

Your Village and Mine
C. H. GARDINER
Illustrated. 7/6

Journal of a Husbandman
RONALD DUNCAN
8/6

Devil in Crystal
LOUIS MARLOW
6/–

James Joyce
HARRY LEVIN
8/6

Letters of J. B. Yeates
JOSEPH HONE
Illustrated. 16/–

Poems Chiefly Cornish
A. L. ROWSE
6/–

Roman Vergil
W. F. JACKSON KNIGHT
16/–

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presenting all the features of the Oedipus guilt-syndrome arise, and when they do, they fail to respond to suggestion with the ease and predictability of a machine. Koestler is on ground which is extremely dangerous to writers without clinical facts to support their imagination. But he succeeds.

For this reason one cannot attack the improbability of Slavek's simultaneous hysterical and confusional response. Here too there are places where Koestler, in applying his own method to a story of his own invention, leaves us in deliberate doubt. Take the incident which ends with the burning of Slavek—his leg is injured, his hysterical response is a limp. But Koestler's psychiatrist, and as far as we can judge *the patient himself consciously*, identify the police with the tyrannical father-figure. A psychiatrist confronted with the story as Koestler tells it could draw other conclusions. He would find himself obliged to consider (1) *whether the burns were really self-inflicted*, (2) whether in fact, confronted with a pantomimic representation of Slavek's castration complex, he should not consider the whole burning episode as a fantasy of self accusation arising out of Slavek's desire to castrate his own father. In my view the history does not fit the analytical results. It assumes a pure and unadulterated Freudianism which precious few practising psychiatrists would uphold. Deliberately, Koestler leaves the doubt.

One can carry this further. Nobody who writes at all widely in any field, and least of all in the field of psychiatry, can fail to reveal his own psychiatric makeup. It is in this revelation, which is unconscious, and not in the conscious attempt to analyse a puppet self Slavek, that the psycho-political interest of the book lies. If Koestler were ever to come up for classical analysis *himself* this book would be the first document which the analyst would wish to consider. The conception of Slavek, a projected self, the telling of the story, and the side which the narrator takes in the various incidents are all revealing. Koestler shares with

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many other writers—Giono in particular—a characteristic ambivalent attitude to suffering. His work is full of unconscious desmophiliac and odynophiliac fantasies. It is here that one finds the will-to-martyrdom in himself. When Slavek is being beaten up, he enjoys it—" a strange obscene ecstasy " (p. 103) the incident has unmistakable erotic colour—and his maltreatment is linked with auto-erotism (p. 107) whose purpose the author strangely fails to see. Still more illuminating is the breaking-up of the room in search of the kitten (p. 47) and the broken doll image on the previous page. Fascism, in the sense of politically organized violence, is, in my view, an attempt of the individual to orientate himself unconsciously to the reality of death, by cultivating callousness to himself and to others—a low estimate of life and life-value. The violence of Koestler-Slavek's reaction to the political aspect of fascism seems to me to be the passionate negation of unconscious sadomasochism in themselves. Koestler's brilliance in describing horrors compares very strikingly with his flatness elsewhere. And the recounting of horrors with a political purpose, as in Koestler's account of a Jewish massacre, does not act as simply on the reader as one would think. The first reaction is not one of immediate disapproval (witness the enormous popularity of torture in modern films) it is of immediate excitement, followed by a sense of guilt and self-reproach which is projected against the enemy. That is the reason why we can watch rape and murder committed by pirates, gangsters or nazis (public enemies) *with satisfaction*, while we should react equally violently against them if they were attributed to hero-figures with whom we identify ourselves. (*Next of Kin* was almost banned because an English soldier trod on a German's face in it.) It is vital that a propagandist interpreter of a violent age, that is, one who combines artistic integrity with political conviction, should understand this

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mechanism, and Koestler does understand it. But his book will be read for its violence and its readers will excuse their interest in terms of anti-fascism. One cannot psychoanalyse oneself, but Koestler very nearly succeeds in doing so. It is here that the achievement lies. The interplay of the real and the delusional Jerusalem, the burn which may have been self-inflicted, are done to perfection. This is how the evidence presents itself clinically, and, more to the point, it is a picture of the tangle of lies and reality in a deluded world.

If I have concentrated on the psychiatric claims of this book rather than its thesis or its technique, I have done so because they seem to be stressed by the author. I find his work nearest to full success when he is telling rather than commenting—witness the Jewish episode, which ranks as a short story (its original form, no doubt) comparable with "El Verdugo". From the patient, one wants a history, not a diagnosis. And in this book, where patient and physician are one, some lack of insight is to my mind inevitable. But as an achievement the book is too outstanding to dismiss in these terms. My only doubt is whether when the agonized doubt and the agonized refugees are removed from everyday experience, it will not be relegated to the wrong category—the category of pseudo-factual atrocity—as Szobel's drawings were relegated. This is an increasingly inauspicious age for sanity or integrity.

ALEX COMFORT

SAND IN THE GLASS. MICHAEL GARETH LLEWELYN. John Murray. 12*s.* 6*d.*

THE FIRST THING that struck me about this autobiography was its author's insensitivity to language. Often the Anglo-Welsh writer, partly perhaps because he is using a language to which he is never *quite* accustomed, is apt to scrutinize his words with great curiosity, to pull his

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phrases about a bit before using them, as a woman does a victimized hat. Mr. Llewelyn is not a writer who behaves so. I do not say this only because of his use of tricky words like " fatal " and " exotic ", and because he can describe a minister as " a sheet-anchor to his flock ", but because he is generally the sort of writer whose calls are " clarion ", whose critics are " carping ", whose inns are " hostelries ", whose women belong to the " deadlier sex ". Much of his writing is banal, obvious, adolescent. His book has many slips and clichés. If it were half as long it would be twice as good. And yet, in spite of everything, his narrative is interesting, informative, and valuable.

Mr. Llewelyn was fortunate enough to be born on the edge of the Glamorganshire coalfield, where Welsh was still the language of home and playground, and where customs such as *Mari Lwyd* and *Canu Calennig* were still observed. His father, a splendid example of Welsh peasant culture, was a working blacksmith, but he was also a poet and a learned antiquary who numbered among his correspondents such scholars and patriots as Sir John Rhŷs and Sir Owen M. Edwards. His mother, a woman of strong personality and intelligence, was the village schoolmistress and the family of seven children was nourished in an atmosphere of endeavour, learning, and endless discussion. With such ancestry and upbringing, it is no wonder Mr. Llewelyn writes as though his childhood and youth were times of fulfilment and happiness.

The primary job of an autobiographical writer is obviously to confront us with a convincing portrait of himself. What a pity so much of this book is given over to secondhand material and to chestnuts about Twm Shõn Catti and Yr Hen Blwy'. And what a pity this arrangement so often obscures the charming, eager, and idealistic personality which calls itself Michael Gareth Llewelyn.

GLYN JONES